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DEPT FOR AF/E AND AF A/S FRAZER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/2/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: Somalia - Conversation with President Yusuf

REF: Nairobi 4240

Classified by PolOff Hodan Hassan. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) On November 1 Ambassador and Special Envoy telephoned President Yusuf to discuss the search for a replacement for former Prime Minister Ali Gedi. They also underlined our concern about the current insecurities and humanitarian situation in Mogadishu.

¶2. (C) President Yusuf said the search for a Gedi replacement is on-going and several candidates have emerged from consultations with key groups. Although he acknowledged as possibilities two members of parliament, Abdullahi Afrah and Mohamed Addou, it seemed clear that the search was concentrating on options from outside the parliament. Yusuf mentioned Abdullahi Warsame Nur (Comment: We would welcome any information Washington can ascertain as to the skills and reputation of Warsame, an Ohio resident. End Comment), Mohamed Aseyr Lugey, and Hassan Sheikh Ali which were the same names provided to us earlier by his Deputy Chief of Staff Mohamed Abdirizak in a meeting on October 29 (reftel). Yusuf asked the United States to review the names and offer any feedback. He said a decision will be made within two weeks.

¶3. (C) According to Yusuf the parliament is currently debating the recommendations from the National Reconciliation Congress (NRC) and in particular the suggestion to amend the Transitional Federal Charter so that non-MPs can serve in the cabinet. He said he is putting a lot of pressure on the parliament to pass the recommendations. When the Ambassador suggested that probably other changes to the government in addition to the prime minister would also seem indicated, Yusuf agreed, saying that he is planning to bring in "able people" into key cabinet positions (Comment: He did not specify how many or which ministers may lose their posts. End Comment)

¶4. (C) The Ambassador emphasized to Yusuf the critical importance of reaching out to moderate members of the opposition in Asmara or elsewhere. Yusuf responded that he is open to engage in dialogue with the opposition and to help support such outreach had asked Ali Mahdi to travel to Baidoa and advise him on this issue. Yusuf added that upon Mahdi's arrival, he will call the Ambassador to talk further on outreach to the opposition.

¶5. (U) Special Envoy noted to Yusuf our own and the international community's concern over the humanitarian situation in Mogadishu. He referred to the UN/NGO statement highly critical of the TFG especially regarding reports of a major outflow of IDPs from the City. Yusuf

acknowledged our concern and responded that he was monitoring the situation. He referred to a statement that was to be issued (COMMENT: Which may have been the one read at Somali Embassy Nairobi Press Conference today END COMMENT).

¶6. (C) Yusuf attributed the growing violence in Mogadishu to the introduction of increasing numbers of shabaab fighters into the city from terrorist training camps in the Lower Juba region. He lamented the difficulties faced by the TFG forces who need to fight the terrorists but must also protect the civilian population.

END

RANNEBERGER